A

FAST-SERMON

Preached before the

LORD-MAYOR,

AND

Court of ALDERMEN,

OF THE

City of *LONDON*,

On *Friday*, *Septemb.* 2. 1748.

LADBROKE Mayor.

Tueſday *the 6th Day of* September 1748, *and in the Twenty Second Year of the Reign of King* George *the Second, of* Great Britain, &c.

IT is Ordered, that the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Mr. *Parker*, for his Sermon preached before the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of this City at the Cathedral Church of Saint *Paul*, on *Friday* the Second Inſtant, being the Anniverſary Faſt appointed to be obſerved for the dreadful Fire in *London* which happened in 1666, and that he be deſired to print the ſame.

Man.

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The Natural Effect, and Religious Improvement of extraordinary Divine Judgments, and of Solemn Fasts instituted in Remembrance of them.

A

SERMON

Preached before the Right Honourable

The LORD-MAYOR,

The ALDERMEN,

And CITIZENS of *LONDON*,

AT THE

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*,

On *Friday*, *Sept.* 2. 1748.

Being the Anniversary Fast appointed for the dreadful Fire in *London* in the Year 1666.

By WILLIAM PARKER M.A.
Fellow of *Balliol* College in *Oxford*.

OXFORD,
Printed at the THEATRE for JAMES FLETCHER in the *Turl*, and Sold by J. and J. RIVINGTON in St. *Paul*'s Church-Yard, *London*. MDCCXLVIII.

Imprimatur,

J. PURNELL,

Vice-Can. *Oxon.*

Sept. 26. 1748.

To the Right Honourable

Sir Robert Ladbroke,

LORD-MAYOR

Of the CITY of *LONDON*,

And the Court of ALDERMEN:

This Diſcourſe, My Lord, preached at your requeſt; and publiſhed, Gentlemen, in obedience to the command of your court, naturally throws itſelf under your patronage. May it have the religious effect intended by it; and be accepted as an inſtance of the entire deference paid to your authority, by

My Lord, and Gentlemen,

your moſt faithful,

Oxford,
Sept. 28. 1748.

and moſt obedient

humble ſervant

W. PARKER.

ISAIAH XXVI. 9.

When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs.

THE ſupreme and all-wiſe governor of the univerſe makes uſe of different ſanctions, for the ſupport of his authority, over rational creatures. Sanctions, at the ſame time beſt adapted, no doubt, to the nature of moral agents, and the promotion of moral happineſs. The felicities of heaven, and the miſeries of a dreadful eternity, are ſanctions acting at a diſtance. When theſe fail of ſucceſs, then *preſent*, and more *alarming* motives are applied. Fires, and earthquakes, wars, peſtilence, and famine are immediate executioners of divine vengeance, or inſtruments of divine admonition; and their voice, as they are ſuch, commands immediate attention.

But even among theſe latter ſources of fear and horror, ſome are more extenſive in their effect

effect than others. For the greater and more diffuſive the calamity is, the ſtronger uſually, and more conſpicuous is the demonſtration of divine power. Where a ſingle individual, or a private family is the object of infliction, the influence is confined within the narrow ſphere of their neighbourhood or acquaintance: but when the judgment ſpreads itſelf through a wider circumference, the whole community trembles: *And when the* city *periſheth, the wiſe man layeth it to heart.*

The whole body perhaps is thrown into convulſions, from the ſuddenly afflicted ſtate of ſo great a number of it's members. But the misfortune is, that very few, the truly *wiſe* alone, by ſerious reflection upon the cauſe, and propoſed end of theſe judgments, make a religious improvement of them. The generality of men are at firſt alarmed; they lament the accident; and then forget it. Perhaps they endeavour to account for it in a *natural* way; and ſo having ſatisfied their curioſity, acquieſce in their diſcovery of the neareſt efficient cauſe, without carrying their thoughts any further; without lifting up their minds to the power of him, who preſides inviſibly over all the courſes of nature: of him, who ſendeth war, and who ſendeth famine; *who ſaith to the ſword,*

ſword, ſword, go through that land and devour it; or who ſtretcheth forth his hand, and breaketh off the ſtaff of the bread thereof; or who commandeth a peſtilence, and poureth out his fury upon the land in blood. For it is the Lord who ſpeaketh, whether it be by war, or by peſtilence, by famine, or by fire.

Now if by any of theſe his ſorer judgments more lively impreſſions are made upon the mind, yet perhaps they endure but for a time: for when *temptation ariſeth* from more pleaſing and captivating objects, *they preſently fade away.* It will not therefore I hope, be thought unſeaſonable to the occaſion of this day's ſolemnity, from the natural effect of extraordinary divine judgments upon the mind, to conſider what ſhould be their improved influence; and what is the beſt means of promoting this improvement.

The firſt effect then of theſe judgments, which ariſes in the courſe of nature, is a ſuddain alarm upon the ſpirits. Fear is a natural paſſion implanted in us for very uſeful purpoſes. And to extinguiſh it entirely, would perhaps be as uſeleſs a victory, as the attempt might be vain. To extirpate nature utterly is impoſſible, how far ſo ever ſome men may have proceeded in a monſtrous progreſs of vice towards

it. Now fear is one of the ſtrongeſt paſſions adherent to our nature: how much ſoever then the fire may be ſmother'd for a time, the flame *will* ſometimes break through it's covering: the more the ſpring is bent, with the greater elaſticity will it return, when it gets the better of the preſſure laid upon it. This Remark is juſtified by the violent emotions of ſome deſperate infidels, that have long endeavour'd to ſubdue their fears, by dedicating their days to ridicule, but have loſt all their impious reſolution, when the terrors of death have ſet themſelves in array againſt them. *Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy!* was the exclamation of wicked *Ahab* to the prophet that was ſent to denounce judgment againſt him. And though men may pretend in the hours of irreligious mockery, and blaſphemous profaneneſs, to have baniſhed every religious paſſion, yet *when their deſtruction threatens them as a whirlwind; then their fear cometh as deſolation; diſtreſs and anguiſh then taketh hold of them.*

Thus we ſee the paſſion univerſally prevailing; the uſe of it is to alarm us againſt the impending evil; that by foreſeeing, and being render'd uneaſy under the apprehenſions of danger, we may take all proper precautions to prevent or avoid the ſtroke. All our paſſions were

were implanted in us for ſome good end. Fear is a natural paſſion; the proper application of it will be our virtue: and what can the proper application be, but to be warned by example, or terrified by evils threaten'd to ourſelves? *Think ye that theſe Galilæans, were ſinners above all the Galilæans*, ſaith the great inſtructor of men, *becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent; ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.*

Another effect of theſe judgments leading to the ſame end is, that they are uſually look'd upon with horror. This is that affection or ſudden ſhock of mind which we feel at the ſight of any dreadful, deformed preſent object; or the more remote proſpect of any diſtant one; whether removed by interval of time or place; whether obvious to the ſenſes, or preſented only by the imagination. The difference between this paſſion and that of fear is, that the latter ariſes from the apprehenſion of evil threaten'd to ourſelves, or to ſomething that is dear and valuable to us: the former may ariſe where neither we ourſelves, nor any thing which we greatly eſteem is concerned. Thus the burning of *Troy* may affect us with horror, though it cannot with fear.

This affection is uſually attended with ano-

ther, which we call commiſeration or pity. A paſſion, which however it may be aſcribed by ſome miſtaken judges of human nature meerly to a principle of ſelfiſhneſs, and ſelfiſh fear, or by others to the imbecillity of human nature, and ſo is ſtiled an infirmity, yet no doubt was ingrafted in us by the original author of our being, for a merciful and generous purpoſe, urging us to the relief of our ſuffering fellow creatures, where they are capable of receiving relief from our liberality. For though we cannot relieve an inhabitant of ancient Troy, for whom our heart has often bled, yet the poetical picture of Troy in flames may ſoften our nature towards a diſtreſs'd Briton.

The laſt, and moſt univerſally prevailing effect, which I ſhall mention, of theſe judgments, eſpecially in theſe days of enquiry after ſcience, is a curioſity of enquiring into the cauſes of the calamity. And theſe may be either immediate or remote; either inſtrumental or primary. The general fault of men, as I obſerved, is that they uſually acquieſce in having diſcover'd the neareſt efficient cauſe, without carrying their thoughts any higher up to the firſt univerſal mover.

For though it might be impious, as it is uncharitable, to conſtrue every calamitous accident

cident into an immediate divine judgment: *Though there may be a fire and the Lord not be in the fire; or a ſtrong wind may paſs, and the Lord not be in the wind*; yet we are aſſured that he does not always ſpeak to ſinful man in the *ſmall ſtill voice alone. Though there may be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it; yet when the trumpet hath blown*, ſaith the prophet, *ſhall not the people be afraid? when the lion hath rored, who will not fear? when the Lord hath ſpoken*, by any extraordinary demonſtration of power, *who will not propheſie?*

It was the fault indeed of ſome puritanical men in a late age of enthuſiaſm to attribute too much to divine judgments: to cry out *the cauſe of the Lord*, againſt every ſignal ſufferer: to call in the deity where no apparent reaſon could be aſſign'd worthy of his immediate interpoſition: the fault of the preſent age is almoſt totally to exclude the deity from his government of the moral world; as if he had reſerved no power of interpoſition to himſelf: to attribute every event to the courſe of nature. But then let us remember amidſt the revolutions of ſecondary agents, who is their primary; let us remember, who is the author of nature. For whatever we may attribute to chance or fortune; to the negligence or malice of our fellow

low creatures amidſt the accidents that befal us; yet in the original connexion between the cauſe and the effect, every event is agreeable to the primary diſpenſation of a ſuperior agent. It was God who ſo firſt ordered things in the diſpoſition of nature, that after the fall of man, progreſſive wickedneſs ſhould meet with theſe alarms. When he firſt conſtituted things, and weighed their powers in the balance, he might have forbid the waters ever to tranſgreſs their bounds, or the fire to devour beyond its uſeful limits. But he who for certain ends implanted in us paſſions of fear, conſternation, horror, and compaſſion, aſſign'd objects alſo correſpondent to them, upon fit occaſions to excite theſe paſſions.

The natural effect then of theſe alarms, and their conſequent affections, if properly attended to, will be ſerious reflection upon the cauſes that gave occaſion to the alarm; to awaken reaſon, and call her to her proper ſtation: the event of ſerious reflection under the guardianſhip of reaſon, will be ſerious reſolution upon a future rational, and virtuous conduct; a reſolution, either tranſitory, or permanent. When the paſſions then are thus alarm'd by fears, or ſufferings, or by the horrors in view of a ſtorm we have eſcaped, it will be our buſineſs to promote

mote the work of nature: to confine our attention: to guard againſt the calm of life, as though we ſtill ſailed in danger of a ſhipwreck.

Our next enquiry therefore will be how to make theſe paſſions and their effects durable, ſo that we may reap their intended fruit.

Now for this end various means have been deviſed by the beſt obſervers of human nature, and her methods of operation. Among the reſt, none has been more univerſally received or approved of than publick days of abſtinence, reflection, and humiliation. Even the heathens by the light of nature, had their days of proceſſion and ſupplication to their Gods, of intermiſſion of buſineſs, and the common employments of life, under any preſent, or impending calamity. Solemn games, or plays were celebrated, according to the Roman orator, which were religious inſtitutions among them*, *Nor was any thing omitted, which was thought expedient to appeaſe the Gods.* After any ſurprizing prodigy, ſolemn days, and rites of deprecation were injoin'd by law: and why may not ſtated days of ſerious meditation upon paſt judgments, upon evils already executed, be applied by chriſtians to very uſeful purpoſes?

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* Tull. cont. Cat. Orat. 3.

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The mind of man is very apt to forget the calamities it hath ſuffered; very ſeldom recollects the judgments in which it hath had no ſhare. We may venture to ſay that many among us would ſcarce ever have heard of the judiciary calamity of this day, had it not been for this day's ſolemnity of Humiliation. Highly reaſonable is it therefore, that certain ſeaſons of religious recollection ſhould be appointed, wherein men may call to mind the cauſes of thoſe judgments which their fore-fathers have felt: a great happineſs ſhould they think it to be thus admoniſhed, by ſerious recollection, and a conſequent reformation, to prevent the neceſſity of any ſuch inflictions upon themſelves. This is, as it were, to perpetuate the judgments of the Lord upon the earth; to keep alive in our minds the ſeverer diſpenſations of his providence, whilſt we live ourſelves under a benigner aſpect; to continue down all the moral effects of thoſe miſeries, which the ſins of our anceſtors produced, without feeling their ſeverities; to learn righteouſneſs, at the expence of another's ſufferings.

It has been the artful endeavour of our modern profane infidels to laugh every religious inſtitution out of the world, that they might thereby baniſh every religious ſentiment. It could

could not reaſonably be expected therefore, that ſuch ſacred ſolemnities of faſting as the preſent, being allowed promoters or preſervatives of piety, ſhould by any means eſcape their cenſure.

It hath been amply objected by an * author of more wit and raillery, than ſolid argumentation and judgment; *that nothing can be more abſurd, than to make abſtinence from food or pleaſures meritorious, any further than it conduces to health, or qualifies us for buſineſs: that it is profane to ſuppoſe that the good God takes pleaſure in vexing, and tormenting his creatures; and therefore that it is ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that any part of religion conſiſts in days of faſting.*

We diſown indeed, that we have any claim of *merit*, at the hands of God, from our very beſt actions. It is no more than our duty, that we exert the faculties which he hath given us, to the purpoſes for which he deſigned them: that we apply them in the beſt manner we are able, to the promotion of his glory, and our own happineſs. But then as it is our duty to employ them thus, ſo is it conſequently incumbent upon us, to make uſe of all thoſe means which may aſſiſt us in this application. Becauſe he that is obliged to purſue the end, is by the

* Independent Whig. No. 27.

ſame obligation bound to embrace all the means conducive to that end. Now our author allows in his very objection, that abſtinence may, in ſome caſes, be expedient *to qualify us for buſineſs*; becauſe he maintains it to be no further *allowable*, than as it is ſubſervient to this view. But if it may at any time be uſeful to qualify us for buſineſs in general, why not for that important buſineſs which is the great end of life? And if it may ſometimes be conducive to health, by which I ſuppoſe he would mean the health of the *body*; as there is ſo cloſe a connexion between the *mind* and the *body*, that they have a conſtant mutual influence upon each other, why may it not by promoting the health, the good conſtitution, and regular organization of the animal powers, be thereby ſerviceable to thoſe of an intellectual nature, and promote the due vigour and activity of the ſoul? Abſtinence indeed has by all ſtudious perſons, who have been beſt acquainted with the operations of the ſoul, the determinations of the will, and the progreſs of the underſtanding, and with all the preparatives requiſite for a due exerciſe of it's powers, been allowed the beſt aſſiſtant in its reſearches, the moſt faithful guardian of it's freedom.

But further, as the greateſt misfortunes of our

our nature ariſe from an unhappy conteſt between our animal and rational faculties, and from the ſuperiority which the former bear over the latter, it may be prudent at leaſt, if not neceſſary, at certain intervals of time, to curb the luxuriances of paſſion, in order to reſtore reaſon to her proper ſway: to teach thoſe irregular claimants of power, the *ſenſual deſires*, to obey the reins of wiſdom, by denying them their uſual indulgences: to reduce the enemy by cutting off his ſupplies, whom you cannot ſubdue in a pitch'd conteſt.

For a proof of theſe things, we need only appeal to our very witty author himſelf, who has the art of blending always a ſubtle mixture of truth with his ſpecious falſhood, that the former may the better introduce and recommend the latter; where he aſſerts, agreeably to the demand of our preſent ſolemnity, the following weighty truths: * religion, ſaith he, and philoſophy too *teaches us to ſubmit to afflictions and calamities with patience and humility, and to conſider them either as effects of our own intemperance, and folly; as the neceſſary and inevitable concomitants of human nature, or the ſtrokes of providence intended for our correction and amendment: nor do I deny but it may be ſome-*

* Independent Whig. No. 38.

times lawful, and expedient too, mechanically to prepare our minds with diſpoſitions ſuitable to the actions they are to produce. *Mechanical* preparations then upon ſome occaſions are allowed by him to be not only lawful but expedient too: and if there may be even a *mechanical* power in faſting, why is it to be ridiculed and exploded? Or what preparatives is it moſt reaſonable for us to ſubmit to, unleſs ſuch as the deity hath pointed out to us by expreſs revelation; and ſuch as by univerſal experience are found to be moſt effectual?

Our author ſuppoſes in one place, that occaſional abſtinence may be *conducive to health*; yet in other places he calls it *ſtarving, a practice tending to deſtroy our beings, or make them miſerable.* But how does he make this conceſſion, and this cenſure conſiſtent with each other? Or, to anſwer our author in his own language, how does that *which contributes to health*, tend to make men ghoſts before their time? Let him take heed, leſt within the ſpace of a few ſentences, he ſhould unwarily interfere with his own objections. But it is no wonder that he is ſo dexterous in oppoſing all the reſt of mankind who is ſo ſubtle and ingenious in contradicting himſelf. Unleſs he ſhall ſay, that whatever abſtinence is dedicated to religious

gious purpoſes muſt be prejudicial, though at the ſame time if it had been uſed upon prudential phyſical views, it might have been conducive to health.

The truth is; proper abſtinence may be a wholeſome diſcipline to the ſoul, as well as to the body; and for this very reaſon ſerviceable to the former, becauſe it contributes to the health of the latter. Shall we then quarrel with a ſalutary medicine becauſe we diſlike the time of it's application, or the phyſician who preſcribed it? though we own at the ſame time, that if it had not been preſcribed, or this very time fixt for it's adminiſtration, it might have been expedient and commendable, if applied at our own direction.

The uſe of publick inſtitutions is, that by fixing the duty to a certain ſeaſon, they ſecure it's diſcharge; which if left vague and open to the direction of each individual, would perhaps by the generality of men, how uſeful ſoever to the ſoul or body, have been totally neglected. We are commanded according to our author's * own conceſſion, by the law of our religion to *faſt* as well as *pray*. Though faſting therefore were not a duty by the law of nature, it might become ſo by divine appointment. The

* Independent Whig. No. 34.

precept we ſee is general, and is to be perform'd *ſometimes*; the limitation of time and occaſion is left to the particular exigences of men, and the determination of thoſe in authority; as is the execution and application of moſt general laws. None is required inconſiſtent with health: allowance is to be made to caſes of particular conſtitutions: *all* may abſtain in ſome degree, for a few hours indulged to meditation, with regard to the *quantity* of their food; and for a longer time with regard to the *quality*. But why may not publick authority ſometimes confine that duty to ſtated days of performance, which all men we ſee, are commanded to do *ſometimes*; and which our author allows, nay rather thinks expedient for them at certain times *voluntarily* to practiſe, on account of it's *natural* ſervices. The great author of our religion gave rules to his diſciples, for the obſervance of inſtituted faſts. *When ye faſt*, ſaith he, *be ye not as the Hypocrites*. Their compliance then with the days of faſting inſtituted among Jews, was here ſuppoſed. The due manner only of performing it is preſcribed. It was not to conſiſt meerly in outward dejectedneſs of habit, but in ſincerity of heart.

Religion, we acknowledge, does not conſiſt in

in the meer external obſervance of ſuch rites. Faſting, we confeſs, is not piety; neither is ſackcloth and aſhes righteouſneſs. But faſting may be promotive at leaſt, if not productive, of piety: the humility of the garment may have a tendency to produce humbleneſs of mind: this mental humility, ſeated in a ſenſe of our own infirmities, may terminate in a true repentance. Foraſmuch as by preſenting emblems of contrition to our view, it may recal to our minds the occaſions of our humiliation. For the mind by mediation of the ſenſes, cannot but be affected with the objects that are before it. To rent the garment may with ſome proud and lofty ſpirits, be the moſt effectual way to rent the heart.

This may be the beſt mechanical preparation of ſuch diſpoſitions, as ſhall be prevalent at the throne of grace. When the unhappy prodigal was reduced, by the neceſſity of faſting, or the humble food of husks, to a ſenſe of his former profuſeneſs, and a conſequent return to duty, it was then that the forgiving father ordered his ſervants to bring forth the beſt robe, and put it on him. It was by the ſevere diſcipline of hunger and nakedneſs, that he was render'd worthy to be cloathed with the garments of Joy.

An alteration only in the quality of our food, without any abatement in the quantity may have it's influence, by reminding us of the mournful reaſon which produced that Change. When *thou ſhalt eat thy fleſh with unleavened bread*, and when *with bitter herbs thou ſhalt eat it*, then *thou wilt remember the death of the firſt-born among thy neighbours, amongſt whom thou ſojourned, when the Lord paſſed over thee!*

Wherefore, to draw towards a concluſion, and the lamentable occaſion of this days ſolemnity: we may think perhaps, that we are by no means conſequential ſufferers by the judgments inflicted upon our ancient city: that we are many of us not deſcended from thoſe it's former inhabitants: that our anceſtors may have viewed theſe miſeries at a diſtance, and had no greater ſhare in the calamity, than we ourſelves: that we are therefore probably no loſers by the penalty: but it is our own fault, if we are not gainers by the example. Though perhaps we are little aſſured how far the ſufferings of many in thoſe days may have affected the reſpective fortunes of ſome of us their unknown deſcendants.

Our city, like the fabulous phœnix of the ancients, may have ariſen more youthful, and ſplendid, out of the aſhes of the old: but then the

the more magnificent, and ſpacious, her preſent ſtructures are, the more conſpicuous proof are they of the extent and ſeverity of that judgment, which gave occaſion to ſo great a renovation. It is our grand intereſt, and duty therefore, to take prudent, and religious warning, from theſe calamities, to forſake thoſe ſins, which have deſtroy'd our ancient city; leſt he ſend his judgments again upon *this*, the glory of our land; the great ſtorehouſe of it's riches; even the beauty of all it's ſtrength: *a fire upon our Judah, to deſtroy the palaces of Jeruſalem.*

For we find this calamity as the ſoreſt of evils threaten'd, by the prophet Amos, to many nations ripe for deſtruction: *a fire upon their walls, and upon their houſes, which ſhould deſtroy the palaces thereof.* And we ſee the prophet Jeremiah aſſigning a cauſe particularly inſtrumental in drawing down this vengeance; even the breach of the ſabbath day: *but if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the ſabbath day, and not to bear a burthen, even entering in at the gates of Jeruſalem on the ſabbath day, then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it ſhall devour the palaces of Jeruſalem, and it ſhall not be quenched.* Happy would it be for us and our city, if the like impieties within

her walls did not give us too much reaſon to dread the like viſitation upon her palaces?

The admonitions of the Lord have of late been *frequent*, but are yet *gentle* among us. A ſound of war hath many days, I may now almoſt ſay many years, gone forth in our land; but through the mercy of our God, it hath ſeem'd, with reſpect to us, rather ſent to *terrify*, than to *puniſh*: for whilſt the fields of our neighbours have been fields of blood, our's have been the lands of ſecure plenty. A peſtilence walketh through our herds, but it hath not ſeized upon man. A fire hath lately devoured in your ſtreets, but it ſtopt within the limits of a ſmall deſtruction: being ſent, as it were, rather to demonſtrate it's power, than to exert the whole extent of it's fury. — That fury, which at the ſame time it hath been permitted to exerciſe with an unbridled rage upon other cities. Whereas a ſmall part only of our metropolis was laid in aſhes to be a proof of divine juſtice: the far greateſt part remains a ſtanding memorial of divine goodneſs. For if we acknowledge that the juſtice of the Lord was in the fire, let us acknowledge that his mercy alſo was in the deliverance.

Whilſt the name of fire is grown almoſt familiar to your journals from the calamities of other

other nations; you have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing this day, amidſt the ruin of foreign cities, your lives, your properties, the dearer and tenderer parts of yourſelves, your wives and little ones, this auguſt and flouriſhing city, even within the memory of the youngeſt among you, preſerved by the providence of God from the rage of a devouring flame, ſnatch'd out of the jaws of impending ruin. The fire might have extended it's victory further, and have burned as in ancient days: but he who *ſaith to the winds, be ſtill*, ſaid alſo to the fire, *hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no further; and here ſhall thy proud rage be ſtayed.* His providence having ſet over this city a moſt faithful, vigilant, and active preſiding magiſtrate, to repreſs the rage of the inflammation, and the tumults of the people no leſs dangerous, and oftentimes no leſs pernicious than the fury of the flame itſelf.

You have ſeen in theſe your days, a fire in your city, breaking forth if I may ſo ſpeak, in the very center of all it's riches: you have ſeen it threaten your churches, the houſe of your exchange, your gates, your dwellings: you have ſeen it's fury, and at the ſame time, through the mercy of our God, it's moderation: you have ſeen the fire propitiouſly extinguiſhed, and have the ſatisfaction to behold far the greateſt

part of this city ſtanding yet unhurt by it's flames. If then, as the * Roman orator ſpeaks upon a like occaſion, *the days of our preſervation are more joyous than thoſe of our birth; foraſmuch as we are born without reflexion, but are preſerved with pleaſure*; how great ſhould be our tribute of praiſe to the ſupreme diſpoſer of ſafety and ruin! How ſincere our thankfulneſs to thoſe whom he hath been pleaſed to dignify with the high office of being inſtrumental in ſaving your lives, or ſecuring the materials, and conveniences of your ſubſiſtence! Remember that you have a † magiſtrate who beareth not the ſword in vain. Before whom it hath not been meerly an enſign of dignity, but of defence likewiſe to your properties. Remember alſo, if the grateful remembrance can be any additional recommendation or endearment to you of the place of divine worſhip, that inverting the order of God's proceedings againſt the Jews, there hath been a time, when judgment *among you*, hath *ſtopt* at the houſe of God‡.

* Tull. Orat. cont. Catil.

† Sr Robert Ladbroke, then Lord Mayor, order'd the gates of the exchange to be open'd, for the ſecure reception of the goods of the citizens: and ſtood there in perſon to prevent any confuſion or diſturbance, attended for ſome time by his proper officers. His prudent behaviour upon that occaſion gained him great eſteem among the citizens, and perſonal thanks the next day from the crown.

‡ The laſt fire ſtopt at St Michael's church Cornhill.

And

And let this day, as it returns in your annals, be embraced as an opportunity of recollecting what you felt within yourſelves, as often as the flame preſented itſelf to your view: from your own ſenſations conclude what were thoſe of your anceſtors, when they ſaw a much more extended ruin: when the flame had full commiſſion given it over the city to deſtroy her habitations. What were the ſenſations that accompanied that extenſive triumph of fire! What miſgivings of heart! What faintings of ſpirit! What aſtoniſhment of mind! What changing of the countenance! What trembling of the joints! What ſmiting of the knees together! With how many diſtracting cares were their hearts then at once ſmitten! With what ſolicitude for their friends! With what anguiſh for their children! With what terrors for themſelves, and their own future ſubſiſtence! For the diſtreſſes of families there *were great piercings of heart.*

Let thoſe who had only a diſtant proſpect of the danger, being themſelves ſecure from miſchief, recollect with what feelings of compaſſion they were ſmitten for the calamities of others! With what horrors at the very imagination of the deſtruction that might have fallen upon themſelves! With what joy that they had ſo happily eſcaped the ruin. And

And conſider; if a city thus in flames be ſo frightful a ſpectacle, how dreadful muſt be that of a world on fire! How terrible ſhall be the ſight to the awaking ſinner, when he ſhall be called up into a world of horrors: when there ſhall be no room to eſcape amidſt an univerſal conflagration; no paſſage but from flame to flame! *In that day when the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe; and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the earth alſo, and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up! Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved,* let us learn to ſet accordingly their proper value on them, not to purſue them with greater ardor than they deſerve. For in common prudence, *what manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation, and godlineſs, looking* ſeriouſly forwards, towards *that day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat.* Being aſſured of this one neceſſary truth, that the moſt diſtant point of time, how far ſoever it may be removed, yet becauſe it *is future*, will one day become a preſent period.

Happy will it be for us: it will be our wiſdom, becauſe it is our life, if by any preſent gentler corrections or admonitions of the Lord, if by any accidental terrors of temporal fire,

we

we are moved properly to dread that fire, which is much more to be dreaded; more exquiſite in torture, and more terrible in duration, even the fire which ſhall continually prey upon the impenitent ſinner, *in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death!*

You have ſeen what are the paſſions implanted in us by the wiſe author of nature, what their effects, their intention, and their improvement. Let fear, and horror then have their perfect work: and even though you can forget yourſelves, yet let your commiſeration begin at home. Haſten to the relief of your innocent deſcendants; and by a ſeaſonable reformation prevent thoſe evils which might otherwiſe from the iniquities of their fathers be derived upon them to the third and fourth generation. Let all your curious reſearches into the cauſes of publick calamities, lead you up to the firſt univerſal cauſe: to him who hath ordained the courſes of nature, the reſpective powers of natural agents, and all the various connexions of events.

In ſhort, whilſt we continue to have intereſts upon earth; it will be for the private emolument, as well as it is the duty of us all, who bear any relation to theſe walls, or whoſe habitations are fixt within them, eſpecially upon

on the return of this annual ſolemnity, with united voice to pray to the great protector of cities, and nations, that *this* city, which hath been raiſed by his providence, to be one of the moſt beautiful, and moſt flouriſhing upon earth, may be preſerved by his ſanctifying grace, from periſhing in the wickedneſs of it's own inhabitants. But may it grow in goodneſs, as it grows in riches, till it becomes at length in the brightneſs of it's virtues, as well as the magnificence of it's ſtructures, in an eminent ſenſe, *the city ſet upon an hill, which cannot be hid!*

FINIS.

Lately Publiſh'd,

The Nature and Reaſonableneſs of the Inward Call and Outward Miſſion to the Holy Miniſtry conſider'd. A Sermon preach'd before the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas Lord Biſhop of Oxford, at the Ordination held at Chriſt-Church, on Sunday, Dec. 22. 1745. And before the Univerſity of Oxford, at St. Mary's, on Sunday, March 2. 1745-6.